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## A Second LETTER to a Member of Parliament, touching the Growth and Increase of Popery in England.

SIR,

**T**HE First Letter to a worthy Member of your House this Session, touching the Growth and Increase of Popery in this Kingdom, having found a deservedly kind Acceptance with all Lovers of the Religion, Laws and Liberties of their Native Country, I could not but cast in my Mite (towards the Preservation of what so nearly concerns us all) both as a Supplement to the Former Letter, and also as a Confirmation of it, not doubting but you will take my Well-meaning in this Address, in good Part, who have already given such early Proofs of a Zeal, as well as a Knowledge beyond your years.

'Tis no small satisfaction to every Honest English Man, and True Protestant, to see the Nation begin to awaken from that dead Sleep, in which it has, for some years past, laid [I mean as to the Ground that Popery has gotten since the happy Revolution in the ever Memorable Year 88.] till within a few days one of another, the Two Proclamations that lately came forth, and the Resolves of your Honourable House (in the Votes of Febr. 21. last) do seem to put it beyond all doubt, that the Court, and the Parliament of England, do now begin in good earnest, to Resolve, before 'tis too late, to prevent the further Mischiefs that threaten Us from that Quarter.

The Petition of the Clergy of the County Palatine of Lancaster, lately laid before your Honourable House, shews you (no doubt) the great Reason there is to Complain of the Insolence of the Popish Emissaries that swarm in every Corner of the Land, and give out, That they have now greater Hopes, than for many years past, to Extirpate the Northern *Heretic*, and to Establish their Idolatrous *Worship* in these Kingdoms. The Truth of which, those that live near, or have any Conversation with, our pretended English Catholics, in any Part of the Kingdom, can Testify; and questionless you would hear more of this Matter from all Quarters, were there but a sufficient Security, and a fitting Encouragement given to such, whom, as things stand, either Fear or Interest discourages from the Discharge of their Duty to their Country, in this regard.

You know well Sir, the Romanists (who know their own Strength and Numbers but too well) are none of the Best Neighbours: Their very Mercies are therefore Cruel, because their Malice and Resentments know no Bounds. They are bigotted by a blind Zeal, and neither can nor will forget or forgive any such, as have either the Courage or the Honesty to Oppose them in their pernicious Ways; so that 'tis left with the Wisdom of the Nation, Whether the First Step to Curb the Insolence of the Popish Party, be not to make some *Effectual* Provision for, the Security and Indemnity of such Persons of known and approved Honesty, Integrity, and good Reputation, as shall adventure (for as things now stand, 'tis an Adventure with a witness) to Inform your Honourable House of the Practices of the Popish Faction in this Kingdom.

And if such *Effectual* Provision may not be made in this Juncture of Affairs, we must hereafter even thank our selves, if we are led blind-fold into *Popery* and *Slavery*; from which 'tis true, we were not many years since deliver'd almost miraculously, tho' now, at this day, such our Deliverance is almost forgotten; partly by our own base Ingratitude, and partly by the Management of our subtle Adversaries, whose politic Artifice it is to turn all Events (whether for, or against them) upon Us: So that, the Emissaries of the Court of Rome are confessedly Retainers to St. Peter in this, (It is nothing else) that, in the worst sense, they are expert *Fishers of Men*.

To demonstrate this, I need carry you Sir, no further abroad than our own Country, nor further back than what is yet fresh in our Memories; I mean the Plot discovered in 78. 'Tis true, *Coleman*, some few Priests, and one Lord, suffer'd their deserved Punishment, but for all that, They soon order'd the Matter so, as to turn the Plot upon the Protestants, and quickly improv'd, as to get ground by it, as appear'd by their carrying their Grand Point; [I mean the Succession] for which this Nation has since been plentifully drain'd, both of her Blood and Treasure too. And yet, considering who Govern'd all at Court then, 'tis no wonder that they weather'd that Storm so soon as they did. But 'tis surprizing to consider, how fatal a Blunder they made in the following Reign, when they had the Game entirely in their own hands. There was a Time, when all, but their own Party, attributed their Miscarriage to the immediate hand of God. But the greatest Riddle is behind, That after so conspicuous a Turn of Providence, as scarce any Age or History can parallel, when every body thought that Popery had been laid in its winding-sheet, and past all hopes of Recovery on this side of the Waters; and that under so Excellent a Prince as our present Gracious King William, who is both in his Interests and Affections too, the most averse to Romish Superstition and Idolatry; and who in his Nature, abominates Popish Tyranny and Cruelty; I say, that under such a Prince, and such a Government as Ours is, the Papists should get ground among Us, and pervert multitudes of people of all Ranks and Degrees, seems incredible, did it not too evidently appear in fact to be true. It looks as if that Infatuation, which under the Last Reign attended them, was in This fallen upon Us.

'Tis true, during the Continuance of the late War with France, the Romanists, generally speaking, (for some Desperado's there were who push'd at all, having nothing but a worthless Life to lose) kept themselves more upon the reserve than they have done since the Conclusion of the General Peace. The only Discouragement they have hitherto lain under, (and in which they are not alone), is the Double Tax; which, as their Estates have been very much undervalued by their Creatures, Tools, or Dependents, has been reduced to near the Half Value, and consequently They have paid no more than their Neighbours (if so much, in some places especially) where their Estates at Rack-Rent have been Assessed in the Tenants Name, if a Protestant. Nay, tho' the Papists occasioned the War, and the Consumption of the Treasure, which year by year the War required, yet so merciful was the Government to them all along, as to leave it to their own Choice, whether they would pay double Taxes or not.



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when some people thought they had not been too hardly dealt withal, if so be their Estates had been Confiscate towards the Charge of the War whilst it continued, and till the Nation was out of Debt, even in the Time of Peace too.

If this seems to sound a little too harsh, (as why shon'd it? seeing, as I said, they occasioned the War) what should hinder, if there were due Encouragement, and Security for such as shall discover them, but all the Jesuites, and other Seminaries Lands in *England* and *Wales*, bought up with their Moneys, only in Trust, and in the Names of the pretended Catholicks, should be seized, and sold for the Use of the Publick? Considering that these Vermin do plant themselves here among us, to no other end, but to ruine and destroy us. If, in our own Defence, we may not disable such Adversaries, as (if let alone) will soon grow upon us, and trample us under their feet, and shew us no more Mercy than a *Turk* shew'd a *Saracen*, then are we in a piteous Case. They deal not so tenderly by their old Refugees, nor by their suspected New Converts abroad, as we deal by them; but if the same Measure was given them nearer home, that they give the poor Protestants in other Countries, they were served but in their kind, tho' our Holy Religion will not suffer us so far to Lhman our selves.

They were not so bold and assuming (as I hinted even now) before the late Peace was concluded, but they have been much more so since: as they concluded 'tis probable) that the former Alliance was in effect broken, upon Conclusion of a General Peace: And the *E.* and *K.* of *Sp.* might probably be brought over, &c. And besides, since the Peace, the Ports have been more open on both sides of the Channel, than in the time of War; so that they have chused, and rechosen (almost at pleasure) and by that means have filled our Lands with such Locusts and Caterpillars as you may every Day hear Complaints of (and very deservedly too) from every Quarter.

Above an Year and half since their pretended *Bp. Gifford* visited the Western Parts of *England*, and confirmed Multitudes, and that so openly too, that almost every body in the Neighbourhood where he came, knew to what intent he was come, and what he did at his several Stages, how he was regaled like a Prince by the Grandees of his Party, and even adored by the common People.

Since which their Ignorant Admirers are possessed with a Conceit, that at the begining of the following Age, 1700, they shall see Popery settled here, and in other Countries, and the Protestant Religion every where utterly rooted out. Now Sir, tho' this seems to be only a foolish Surmize of theirs, and not much to be regarded by us; yet, being once entertained with a Credulity that's peculiar to That Party (as the Vulgar are easily brought to believe that it will be, which they would have be) and being improved by their crafty Priests, who as they are Masters of the Consciences and Purse too of their deluded Partizans; so they never let their Spirits sink (if they can by any means keep them up) under any pressure, they by experience find will work Wonders, and have the like effect among their People, that the Doctrine of Fate hath among the *Turks*; that is, 'twill make the One as freely run their Heads against a Wall, as the Other go boldly up to, and charge, even at, the mouth of a fered Canon.

And tho' their Creatures and Profelytes are obliged on an implicit Belief, and without Examination, to take down in the Lump whatever their Guides infuse into them, and to believe it (tho' Contradictious to the Reason of all Mankind besides) as firmly as if it were Gospel: Yet 'tis not to be doubted but they (I mean their blind Guides) do designedly encourage their credulous People with certain hopes of succeeding in their accursed Enterprizes upon this Church and Nation, by filling their Heads with some plausible ground upon which such hopes and expectations are built: And such probably are the restless Endeavours of the Jesuits abroad, to break the Old Confederacy or Alliance, and to set on Foot and Confirm a New One; by which two sticks (not to say more) may be made One, and therewith they imagin they shall one Day quit their old Scores with us, and Cudgel us obstinate Hereticks into better manners. Another ground they build much upon (as well they may) is our unhappy Divisions, and unreasonable Heats and Animosities at home, within our selves; and the no good Terms the Protestant Princes abroad are at, one with another; for if the Emissaries of that Church, who are Masters of that cursed Matchiavillian Policy, can but once divide a People within themselves, they never despair of compassing their Ends upon them, at some time or other.

Besides the over-ealie Carelesness and Security of many well-meaning People among us, who have been too sanguine, and thought that all danger of the return of Popery and Tyranny was over; when *K. J.* and the pretended *Pr.* and *Fa. Peters* were once scamper'd; have been wonderfully improved to our hurt by the Romish Party, for more than 10 Years together last past.

To which if we add the unparallel'd Tenderness and Compassion of the Government hitherto, and of many of the inferior Magistracy (in all parts of the Kingdom) towards them [the Papists] and that too, at a time when the Protestants Interest has sensibly been sinking every where abroad, and its Professors persecuted even to Death, the Gallies, Bonds and Imprisonments; I say, where so little Opposition has for so many Years (tho' a mistaken pity, or something worse) been made, to put a stop to its Increase and Growth, That so many of our People have been perverted by their indefatigable Emissaries, is so far from being a wonder, that it may rather seem very strange to one who shall seriously reflect on these Things, that they have not before now made themselves Masters of both our Place and Nation too.

But (to speak to the Merits of the Cause) if the real Advantages the Romanist have on their side, be examin'd and lookt into, it must needs be said that the Wonder will still increase, how we have hitherto escaped that utter Destruction, which for the Course of so many Years, they, under so many various Disguises, and by manifold Ways and Means, have all along since the Reformation, been attempting to accomplish and bring about.

I shall Sir, with your patience, but just mention some of the most obvious Methods they have taken, and the unhappy Success (as to us) That those Methods have met with, as to the promoting of their grand Design upon us. All which I humbly submit to the grave Judgement, and Consideration of our Representatives in Parliament, that they in their great Wisdom may take such speedy and effectual Course to put a stop to the progress of the Evil complain'd of, as they shall think fit.



It cannot then be deny'd but the Papists have a vast Advantage over us, in respect of their Unity within themselves; for by the Authority their Priests usurp over their Consciences, they are all as one Man in their common Cause, which is the pulling us down, and setting themselves up. To accomplish which, their Oaths of Secrecy bound upon them by Sacraments too, do make it almost impossible for Man to penetrate into their hidden Works of Darkness; their Doctrines of Merit, and of blind Obedience to their Superiors without reserve, do stand them in great stead too: And so does the vast Number of their several Orders in that Church; and the Multitude of designing Men in every one of those Orders, who stick at no Difficulties, and leave nothing unattempted to effect our utter Extermination. In order to which they turn themselves into all manner of Disguises, strike in with all sorts of Factions, or ill-disposed Persons, create Divisions and Misunderstandings among Protestants, and blow them up into a Flame, and then make their Advantages upon both the contending Parties. The Poet's Proteus himself could never appear in greater variety of Shapes, than the Romish Priests do amongst us, assume at this Day. They can act the parts of Non-Jurors in the Church; of Officers in the Camp; of Merchants on the Exchange; and so down from the fine Bear to the meanest Mechanicks. And by this means do they herd, and mingle, with all sorts of People, and make themselves Masters of their Tempers, Humors and Inclinations, and then they tamper with, and work upon, them accordingly.

And this they are the better enabled to do, because most of their Orders have not only Lands of their own (as I intimated before) but also mighty Sums of Money to each Order belonging, so that by Vertue of the Banks they have in most Countries in Europe; the Jews themselves have not a better Credit for Remittances to any parts of the World, than they. By which means they do not only buy up as many necessitous People as come in their way, if they find them fit for their purpose; but are enabled also to buy off all such Punishments too, as, upon discovery, their Crimes expose them to, (if they can meet with any Person of so prostitute a Conscience, as to expose their very Souls, and much more than their Country, to Sale for Money) and thus do they sometimes strike off old Scores, and run up new ones forthwith, and that with impunity for the most part.

But besides these, they of the Romish Perswasion are said to have not a few of their Party, who, as *Fiston* and *Allybone* heretofore did, study the Common Law in our Inns of Court, the better to enable them to defend their own Party, and to offend us too, whose Security, under God, lies in those very Laws which those Romanists, who are suffered to intrude into those Societies, do only study to elude, or overthrow. And besides, those who do thus by Connivance find Admission into our Inns of Court, (not very much for the Credit of those otherwise very Honourable Societies) there to acquaint themselves with the Theory of the Law; they have many others both in City and Country too, who are bred up to the *Chicanerie*, or wrangling part, or the Practice of the Common Law, and become Solicitors, Petty-Foggers and Make-bates, who set honest People together by the Ears, that they may pick their Pockets. This is not only a Discouragement to Protestants, who are duly qualify'd for that Calling, and whose Bread those Popish Solicitors do eat out of their Heads: But that Party makes a vast Advantage, (not to say many) by the Practice of such Solicitors, who by conveyancing, and letting out peoples Money, by making their last Wills, and soliciting in all sorts of Business, do well know the Strength or Weakness of all the Country round about them, and are by those Means acquainted with the Humours, Tempers and Dispositions of the several Parties, with, or for whom they are concerned. And the Consequence is, that such little Busy-Fellows from time to time, give in an Account unto their Superiors of their Knowledge and daily Observations by them made. By which Means, the Heads of that Party in England, do very probably know better than our selves, our Strength and Weakness, and who are for, who against them too. And no Body can teach them, how to make such Information turn them to very good Account. And 'tis too well known to be denied, that some of those sly Popish Factors have so cajoled those poor deluded people (tho' Protestants) among whom they live, as scarce to have paid, in Eleven Years together, so much as a single Poll-Tax of Twelve pence. But that other some of the same Stamp and Character, should for 3 Years together, continue their practice without satisfying the World, that they have ever taken the Oath of Fealty, as required, after the Assassination-plot, by an Act of Parliament, is such a bare-faced and open Defiance to the Laws of the Land, and to the Legislative too, by whom they are Enacted, as is perhaps without all precedent. However, 'tis to be hoped now that the Honourable House of Commons is upon retrenching the Number of Attorneys and Solicitors; that they will in their Great Wisdom begin with such as I have been speaking of, whose Insolence is intollerable, and whose Impudence is, any other way, incurable.

There's another Advantage the Papists make by the pretended Merit of good Works; or a feigned Shew of Charity to Protestants: For though they mortally hate all those (not of their own way) upon whom they bestow their treacherous Mock-Charities, as they curse us at the least once in the Year in their solemn Devotions, by Bell, Book and Candle: Yet, they throw out a fine gilded Bait under a deadly insidious Hook, to catch the ignorant, unsteady common people, who judge only by the out-side of things. Thus the Schooling of some poor Protestants Children is paid in some places, even by Jesuits themselves, upon Condition that such Children shall read only in such Books, (of which you may be sure the Bible is not one), as those their Benefactors shall at free cost furnish them withal. In other places up and down, they have Midwives, and Women-Doctresses, who dabble in Physick and Chyrurgery, who, under pretence of much Tenderness to those Bodies, which they could, were it in their power, consume in a *Swish-field* Bonfire, do lay in wait for, and sometimes catch in their Snare, an ignorant unstable Soul: Which having perverted, they make twofold more a Child of Hell than themselves. Under this Head, (had I not been prevented by the worthy Author of the first Letter) I should have exposed their bold practices in haunting, and tampering with, such persons as are sick or declining (especially if their by-past Lives have been such, as to need a Feather-bed to carry them to Heaven upon) and their ransacking of Prisons, and their gleaning or picking up of Proselytes at the very Gallows; by all which we may plainly perceive, that they stick not to compass Sea and Land, to they may obtain their Ends upon us.

I have but one Thing more Sir, to trouble you at this time withal. I am well satisfied of your Sincerity in the established Religion, and of the due respect you always shew to such of our Clergy as are an

Ornament to their Station, by the Constancy of their Faith, the Regularity of their Lives, the diligent Discharge of their Functions, and their Loyalty to the present King, our Gracious Sovereign Lord William the Third, &c. Now Sir, these are the Men that of all others are the Objects of the Papists mortal Hatred; and if it be the Misfortune of any honest Clergy-man of such a Character, to have a popish Patron; he is sure, to live as uneasy in his Post, as They and their Agents can (or durst attempt to) make him. I make no doubt therefore, but you will permit me to intercede for all such of the Clergy as suffer upon the aforesaid Account; nor can I in the least distrust Their having as many Advocates, as Friends, in your Honourable House. 'Tis the general Concern of the establish'd Church, that the Right of Patronage of Ecclesiastical Benefices should be plac'd in other Hands, than Theirs; whose only purpose it is to root out and to destroy the Church of England. Their Benefices are either Sold, or bestow'd so, as to be made rather a Snare, than a free Gift to the Prebendary. There's no great harm in that, (provided the Governours of the Church could be assur'd well of this, that the wealthiest Clerks would always make the best Parsons, Vicars, or Curates) so in this case, if the Danger of Simony be avoided, a Man may (if he thinks fit) part with his Money to those Patrons, or their Agitators, and yet preserve his Liberty. Whereas, the other way, a Man is shackled of course; for either through want of Learning or Parts, Morality or Honesty (as the choice is commonly made) the weak Tools cannot, or the such, as thro' Fear of Feebleness of Spirit, or some other mean and sordid Consideration, will not stand their Ground, and defend their Flocks, when they see the Wolf a coming to worry and to devour them. To remedy which Inconveniencies, two Acts of Parliament have been made (the latter in '06 about the Year 98) to invest the Livings of all Recusants in Both the Universities. For what reason they have not thought fit to look after Their Concern in it, they do best know; it concerns not me to enquire. However this Their tacit Disclaimet has encouraged such Patrons, as are Recusants to elude the Law, and to laugh at it, and the Universities too. Nay, since that Act last mentioned, 'tis well known, that the Market runs higher than ever in all parts of England. And yet 'tis thought the next or reversional Presentations of most of their Livings are dispos'd of, many of them at excessive Rates too. But admitting they are so, yet what should hinder, but some Care may be taken of Posterity? Or why might not these Livings be invest'd in the K. by Act of Parliament, and Commissioners appointed, as to raise such Grants as are already on Foot; so to dispose of the Remainder or perpetual Advowson? And considering the Hardships those Incumbents have submitted to, who have obtained succedaneous Presentations after others, or after themselves; why might not such be allow'd the Preemption or First Refusal? And next to them any other person qualified by Law; that is, being a profess'd Protestant, and having taken the Oaths, &c. By this means the Preferments would soon be plac'd in better Hands, and the Inconveniencies before mentioned in a great Measure, (if not altogether) would be removed, and a considerable Sum advanced, either to augment the poorer Vicarages and Curacies, or for such other charitable Uses, as His Majesty and Both Houses of Parliament shall think fit to appropriate or apply it to.

If it be Objected, That to strip Recusants of the Right of the Patronage of their Livings, is an Hardship upon them. This is soon Answer'd: First, That such Patronage, or Right to fill a Church when vacant, is a great Trust, for GOD, and His Church, or People. Now when this Trust is gotten into such hands as can't but abuse it, and prostitute it to the most scandalous and vile purposes; there such incurable Abuse of a Trust, does in many like cases forfeit the Trust; and if so, Why not in this case? Especially if the consequence, weight, and moment of the Abuse be duly considered. Secondly, 'Tis plain, that the KING, Lords, and Commons, have more than once, by the Laws even now mentioned, virtually declared a Forfeiture of such Trust in the Popish Patrons, by transferring their Right of Presenting to, and Investing them in, Both the Universities. And therefore, Thirdly, The same Supream Authority may Invest them other where, if it thinks fit, upon the Incurable Abuse of this Great Trust; so that their Right of Presenting may as justly be transferr'd to the King, as to the Universities: Neither is it enough to say, that in this case, there's an Hardship upon some particular persons, which is inconsistent with Justice; For, Fourthly, a private Good, must (in Reason) give way to a publick One: Now the Hardship does really lye upon the whole Church of England, if the particular Churches are ill-provided for: The Injury in such Case redounds to a far greater number of private persons (as it may happen) in one particular Cure or Parish, than there are popish Patrons in the whole Kingdom. In fine, Sir, if those Recusant Patrons do follow the Direction of their Family-priests in disposing of their Benefices (as no Body can doubt but they do.) I suppose it will be granted, that their Priests will not have so much Tendernefs for Ours, as to scruple the drawing them into Simony; but if there's nothing of that, but only a reversional Presentation is bought [the Incumbent being alive and in good health,] then if (as most people think it does) the Money goes to the Priest, it is soon made a part of their *Corban*, or the Treasure of their Church; and how far that's employ'd to ruine Ours, you have been told before. So that our abused Clergy do just as wisely in this case, as those Traders did in the late War, who furnish'd France with Lead and Salt-petre, the better to enable them to destroy our Armies, to annoy our Coasts, to burn our Towns, to take our Shipping, and to ruin us in our Trade.

I fear Sir, I have exceeded my bounds (tho' there's still in reserve, and behind, what would swell this Letter into a Volume, should I descend to particulars) however if these general hints, or any one of them, shall, in any thing, advantage the publick, (which is the only aim of this paper:) Then I shall neither despair of obtaining Your Pardon, nor repent of running any other Hazard, but that of offending Your Self; nor so much for my Zeal in this Cause, as for the meanness of my Performance. And yet I have no great reason to fear, but that if your discerning Judgement approves of the One, Your great Candor and Ingenuity will put a favourable Censure upon the other. I am, Sir, your most Obedient Servant.

Your most Humble and Obedient Servant.



